

March 19, 1974

it dark Thursday or black Thursday maybe because quite a few amendments were tacked on a bill and accepted by very few votes, maybe 12 or 14 votes. And I don't say that these amendments weren't all right and perhaps I voted for them but I think when we're spending the taxpayer's money, that we should get a larger number of votes and maybe this Body will decide on some other figure than the majority but I think we should have more votes than just 12 or 14 votes to spend the taxpayer's money. Now, Senator Carpenter suggests that we limit this to Appropriation Committee bills but I think it should apply, he may not agree, but I think it should apply to large amounts of money that we spend on any aid bill. So I doubt if we should make that change. Senator Waldron pointed his finger at the Appropriations Committee and I certainly didn't mean just the Appropriations Committee bills, Senator Waldron, so I think some change should be made and it's up to this Body to decide what change it should be.

PRESIDENT: Senator Chambers is next, then Syas, Nore, Carpenter.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. President and members of the Legislature. I'm opposed to the amendment. First of all, when we talk about fiscal responsibility, it is something that relates to the entire Legislature but we must remember that the Budget Committee is not composed of a majority of the elected members of this Body and that a very small number of people in a committee can add an amendment to a bill. It doesn't even take a majority of a committee to do that but only a majority of those voting. So if you have a committee, I'm telling you the way the committee structure can operate, if you have a committee and three people are going to vote on an amendment and two voting one way can put an amendment on a bill. There's nothing in the rules of the Legislature determining how many committee votes it takes to add an amendment. A majority may be needed to advance or kill a bill but to add an amendment only a majority of those in the committee voting. On the floor of the Legislature, Senator Johnson mentioned a Thursday which you refer to as dark or black Thursday because a number of the amendments had been added to the budget bill. Since most members in this Body are white, I'll call it white Thursday because in every case, a majority of the voters were white. However, during that time I was able to get an amendment to the Appropriations bill which allowed some construction at York. The women's reformatory which the Budget Committee in its wisdom did not see fit to add to the bill. At the time I offered the amendment, the Body membership had dwindled down to where there were not even a majority of the members present but by having a majority of those who were present being allowed to add an amendment to a bill, some needed money was appropriated to an area that had been ignored. So we cannot always at the times needed have the number of people required to have a majority of the elected members vote on an amendment. If at any point along the way a majority of the senators for any reason decide that an amendment should not remain on that bill, it can be removed. And I think we ought to leave the procedure as it is. Then when these important bills come up for debate on General File, that might be an incentive for a majority of the members to be present. I'm opposed to the rules change. I don't think it will increase efficiency, it will not resolve philosophical differences among the senators, it will not insure that things will get over to the Governor's office that he will pass rather than veto. I don't see any advantage that can be gained by this. It might prevent certain amendments from